

□ 0915

## CALLING THE CRISIS FOR WHAT IT IS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Madam Speaker, this is indeed I think a very dark day. The institution is basically dysfunctional today and we ought to call it for what it is. This great Nation is being held hostage by some extremists who came to this institution and have not been able to get their way through the normal process that served this Republic for over 200 years, and so we are now seeing the equivalent of 2-year-old tantrums that we see out on the playground. No one should be surprised as to where we are. The Speaker made it very clear from day one where he was going.

If we look at these quotes, in April he said, "The President will veto a number of things, and we'll put them all on the debt ceiling and then he'll decide how big a crisis he wants."

Oh, they could not wait for the crisis. Then again in September he said, "I don't care what the price is. I don't care if we have no executive offices and I don't care if there are no bonds for 30 days, not at this time."

He has been very clear what his strategy was, create a crisis for this great, great Republic like it has never seen before. Oh, will that not be historic?

Let us not look at politicians' words. Let us look at what the Standard & Poor's people say. They do not think a lot of this crisis. They do not think that this is real funny. They do not appreciate our tantrum. Look what they said in the New York Times this weekend.

They warn Government of the threat of default. If they lower the Nation's credit rating, we are going to see an increase in interest rates, which our children are going to pay forever and ever and they are also going to see interest rates increased on the average American the average American businessowner, the average American mortgageowner and so forth.

So, Americans, you are paying a very high price for this political theater, for this 2-year-old temper tantrum, because people do not want to play by the rules that Jefferson and everyone else thought was fine for over 200 years.

We continue to see other things. We see them saying that it is perfectly all right that we cut loose on the safety net that has been there for America's children and for people who are relying on Medicare. We see them having their favorite comedian come and talk, about, "Oh, this is great, my mother will be on dog food, the poor will starve, but we'll get them new can openers."

Is that not wonderful? I do not really think that is too funny. I do not think

that is funny at all. It is not the America I knew. The America I knew said every child has a right to a college education, we all should have a clean environment and breathe fresh air, we all ought to be respectful of the elderly and we should not take great joy if we can squeeze some more money out of them or find some way for them to be a little more miserable. I do not think anybody wants to see us jeopardize the full faith and credit of this Government.

I was shocked when I heard Last night this other side was offered a 1-day clean continuing resolution to avoid this crisis and turned it down. Not even 1 day, Not even 1 day would they give it.

This is outrageous, and we really ought to call it for what it is. Do not be surprised. Just get on the phones and tell people you do not like people playing these kind of political games with the full faith and credit of this great Nation.

## RESOLVING THE IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, we are now at the impasse and I would like to review how I believe we got here and how I believe we can get out of it.

I think that this impasse is due in part to both sides, Republicans and the administration, wanting to get some short-term advantages in the polls over the other. I think that the congressional leadership has put measures into these budget resolutions concerning the death penalty, concerning regulatory reform because we know that these are popular with the American people. However, these are not issues which should be mixed at this time with the budget issue. We should stay focused on the budget goals.

I recommend that those issues dealing with death penalty, regulatory reform, anything that is not budget, be taken off the table and addressed at another time. At the same time, the administration made its biggest argument that it was vetoing the bills to protect Medicare. The details of the Medicare provision, I respectfully suggest, were not of great interest to the administration. Their pollster simply told them if the President is seen fighting for Medicare, the President will go up in the polls at least on a short-term basis.

What is that fight about? Right now the Government, that is, the taxpayers, pay 68.5 percent of part B premiums of Medicare. On January 1, the law is scheduled to raise that to 75 percent of the payment coming out of the treasury. The administration knows full well that we do not know where the money is going to come from out of the treasury to pay that increased percentage and that the Republican con-

gressional proposal is to freeze the percentage, not to raise the percentage on senior citizens but just to freeze it where it is. Nevertheless, they are fighting to save Medicare and they think that helps them in the polls.

What, therefore, is the solution? I think that what is called a clean bill is not a solution. A clean bill means a spending authorization with no conditions attached, a borrowing authorization with no conditions attached. That is how we got into this mess. We have had business as usual for 25 years, where there was no restriction on borrow, borrow, borrow, and spend, spend, spend, and that is why we have a national debt of almost \$5 trillion.

I respectfully suggest that the solution is to offer the President a continuing resolution today with one condition, and, that is, we agree on the common goal of reaching a balanced budget in 7 years using Congressional Budget Office figures. We would take all of the details off of the table at this time. I thought Senator DOMENICI made a good suggestion with respect to a Medicare compromise. But if necessary, I would take all that off the table for the moment and concentrate on the goal, and to say that to keep the Government operating, the President must agree with the Congress that we will balance the budget in 7 years and use the common numbers provided by the Congressional Budget Office to match our comparative budgets.

Both of these provisions the President has previously agreed to. During the campaign, the President said the budget could be balanced in 5 years. So presumably the President would have no objection to balancing the budget in 7 years. Second of all, the President lectured Congress 2½ years ago, telling us that the Congressional Budget Office had consistently the best figures for budget analysis. So the President has previously agreed to these provisions.

It seems to me, Madam Speaker, that if the Congress passes a continuing resolution to keep the Government going, break the impasse, allow Federal employees to do their jobs, with only the condition that we agree to a balanced budget in 7 years with the same method of getting there and that all the details can be discussed and if necessary argued out in another forum, we will know for certain whether the President of the United States really wants to balance the budget or was using Medicare as a screen for not doing so.

## A WAY OUT OF THE QUANDARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, this is indeed an unhappy day, and I think to get out of this quandary it might be useful to note how the Government got to this point.

I heard the majority leader say this morning that the President has not engaged, he has not negotiated, and the opposite is really true. The Republicans have been negotiating with themselves. They forgot that they needed to negotiate with Democrats, including the President. Why this failure on their part? In part I think it is the arrogance of power. They have been engaged in a power play. Also, the radical right that controls this House thinks it is always right. They are know-it-alls who sometimes have sounded like know-nothings. We see in recent days the Speaker, who is the father of this all, now kind of blaming his children that he cannot control them.

An example is welfare reform. I saw this morning in the National Journal Congress Daily this headline, "Welfare Bill Conferees Set To Unveil Compromise Today."

Compromise? This is a compromise by Republican conferees meeting with themselves, among themselves, shutting out Democrats, including the President. Congressional Republicans continue to function as if Congress is a partisan fiefdom. It is now 47 days since House conferees were appointed on the welfare reform bill and in those 47 days there has been no serious effort by the Republicans at bipartisan negotiations. They have been going it alone.

I want welfare reform, I have been working on it for years since the mid-1980's. Democratic conferees have expressed our interest in working with the Republican majority and in a letter we sent on Friday laid out critical areas that should be addressed. But regrettably instead of negotiating a bipartisan bill, the Republicans have been busy producing a bill that moves in the wrong direction in critical areas such as the level of funding by the States in child care. It is now clear that the bill they are producing is unacceptable to the President. On Sunday the Chief of Staff Leon Panetta said the President is prepared to veto this legislation.

I say there is a way out. True bipartisanship. The Republicans have to end their arrogance of power. Medicare, they want to stuff into the bill a proposal that would move this country on the path toward doubling the premium on Medicare in the next 7 years.

I say to the Republicans: Look. You have decided you control this House and the Senate and to go it alone. You have sent this country into a perilous course. You must pull back.

#### LET US BALANCE THE BUDGET NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

□ 0930

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, my hometown newspaper, the Cincinnati Enquirer, I think got it just right this morning in their editorial. I would like to read from that editorial here at this time.

To hear the overwrought, over rated White House experts tell it a "train wreck" between the president and Congress will shut down the federal government and end life as we know it.

Wrong. It would only interrupt life as they have come to know it—by temporarily slowing the juggernaut that increases spending with no regard to the future.

To the real world, a backward crank on the federal spending spigot would have a welcome effect: It could wake up Washington with a dash of cold war in the non-stop shower of taxpayer revenues.

By the time this is printed this month's "crisis of the century" in Washington may already be averted. But if today marks the disaster that the White House has predicted so long and loudly Americans should react accordingly by taking their cue from the president. Go golfing.

That's right. After he refused to negotiate and castigated Congress for not working overtime to give him another blank check, President Clinton laced up his spikes and left to play a round of golf. Some crisis.

Can this be the same president whose foaming mouthpiece, Leon Panetta had the appalling bad taste to compare Congress to "terrorists" who "put a gun to the president's head"—this, in the aftermath of the assassination of Israel's prime minister?

Yes. Because no matter what happens to government, politics goes on as usual.

The game plan by Republican leaders Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich is to box in the president by delivering a plan to balance the federal budget and wipe out chronic deficit spending in seven years as promised in the Republican Contract With America.

But Clinton, who once profusely promised to balance the budget in five years has balked, threatening a veto unless they restore enough of his spending to prolong the deficit pain for nine years.

So Republicans stapled the lid shut on the box around Clinton. They offered a temporary credit line to restrain spending but avoid a shut down until December 1 by continuing Government borrowing.

At first, Clinton refused to discuss it and would not even take phone calls from Gingrich and Dole. Then he agreed to negotiate if Republicans would scrub the key element of their plan, Medicare reform. Republicans said no way.

Both sides are playing politics, but at least Congress is trying to accomplish what the majority of voters demanded in 1994, a balanced budget. If that goal is finally achieved, short term pain is justified for long term gain.

Stop the swelling of a \$5 trillion debt that will be hung on the necks of future generations. Besides, the pain is not that bad. Even the worst-case train wreck is more of a bad fender-bender. Essential Government services continue, and despite the White House attempt to blame Congress, it is the President's constitutional duty to negotiate a budget with lawmakers. If Clinton refuses to negotiate, voters should remember that he alone decided to risk spreading flu through financial markets rather than balance the budget 2 years sooner than his own cobbled budget would have achieved.

In this overhyped showdown, this much is clear: For the first time Congress has a plan to balance the budget, and the President is trying to kill it.

That is from my hometown newspaper, the Cincinnati Enquirer, just this morning.

Madam Speaker, the Washington Post, on its front page this morning, also has it exactly right. I will quote from that. "For all the vitriol, all the finger pointing, all the carefully staged photogenic events, the real issue is the Republicans' plan to balance the budget in 2002."

Let us balance the budget now.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE NO BUDGET, NO PAY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam Speaker, America deserves better. Our Government is shut down. We are now in a governmental paralysis here in Washington.

And why? It is a politically created crisis. It is not a crisis that came because of the force of nature. It is something that was created by the force of politicians.

The Gingrich-led Congress has brought to us in the last year a record of mismanagement. They brought the Contract With America to the floor, 31 bills, and they published them in the TV Guide. Three of the thirty-one were signed into law, and we wasted 100 days that could have been spent on making certain that Congress did its work, and then, of course, the Gingrich-led Congress failed to meet its responsibilities.

They were required under law to produce 13 appropriations bills for the President's signature by October 1. How many were presented? Three. Three of thirteen. If they had done their job and presented the bills, we would not be in this crisis today.

Let me add, too, that during this year, with the Gingrich-led Congress, we have seen special interests swarming through the Halls of Capitol Hill. They have been pushing for amendments, outrageous amendments.

Let me give an example of some. First, to cut education. The banking interests came in and forced a change which will increase the costs of student loans by \$10 billion. Kids from working families trying to get an education, trying to make it, will face more debt because the Gingrich-led Republicans have bowed to the banking interests.

Then, of course, there is the environmental agenda of the Gingrich Congress. Amazing. Amazing that in one bill, in 28 pages, they wanted to repeal 14 different environmental protection laws, including the right of the Federal Government to monitor arsenic in drinking water. "Did he say arsenic in drinking water?" Yes, that was one of the bills that they wanted to repeal.

Think about that for a second, the extremism of the Gingrich-led environmental agenda.

But one of the worst, of course, is their proposal to increase Medicare